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## St. Paul receives grant funds By MATTHEW CLARK

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ST. PAUL - The city of St. Paul received a big boost over the weekend for two different projects.

On Saturday, during a special meeting of the St. Paul City Council, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks presented the city of St. Paul with \$93,625 in grant funds to be used for two different infrastructure projects in the city.



St. Paul Mayor Rick Geifer receives a check for \$93,625 in grant funds from USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks on Saturday. St. Paul will use the grant funds for infrastructure improvements at two different projects. (Courtesy photo)

St. Paul received a \$52,125 grant to assist in extending a water line to the 20 acre St. Paul industrial park and a \$41,500 grant to assist in the construction of infrastructure related to the new grocery store that will help create 15 new jobs.

"We work on programs for rural infrastructure and rural housing," Banks said. "It is good to be able to put tax dollars back into the community."

The grants were part of \$325,000 in grants that Rural Development handed out on Saturday. They were from the Rural Business Enterprise Grant funds that are used for a variety of purposes including technical assistance, machinery and equipment purchases, revolving loan creation and building construction.

"This is the most that any community is receiving thus far," Banks said.

Joe Renfro, who is working with the city to bring a grocery store to St. Paul, said that the funds will help expand his grocery store in Altamont.

"We just don't have any room to grow," Renfro said. "We have buildings on both sides of us now in Altamont and this grant will help with the process to expand to St. Paul."

The other part of the grant, will help the city extend a water line to its industrial park, where there is already a business located.

"Number one, the expanding of water to the industrial park which could provide the possibility for housing in that area," St. Paul Mayor Rick Geifer said.

That water line will extend to Westhoff Interiors, a plant located in the new industrial park that builds interiors for yachts and boats. That operation is already starting production in St. Paul.

There is still work to be done to bring the grocery store to St. Paul.

The St. Paul City Council decided to move forward with an agreement for the construction of the new grocery store after voters approved a bond measure in November. The CDC will apply for a \$400,000 loan from Rural

Development. It is a zero percent loan from Rural Development and a financial institution has to back the loan. Geifer said that Farmers State Bank in St. Paul and Walnut will back the loan at one percent and Heartland Rural Electric will receive another one percent. The percentage is the fee charged to funnel the funds.

"It is going to be good for the city and for the grocery store," Renfro said. "I think that this is what they need for growth and we are excited and ready to get started."

David O'Brien, the grant writer for the project, said that this is a big step in the right direction for St. Paul.

"It is very rewarding when the process ends like this," O'Brien said.

The USDA Rural Development funds will be leveraged with the city's contribution of \$32,805 for the projects.

"I think that it is good for the community to see their tax dollars coming back to the community like this," Banks said.

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